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To: IMO Members and other Governments
United Nations and specialized agencies
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **World Maritime Day, 2010**

The Secretary-General has the honour to advise that, in 2010, the World Maritime Day will be observed during the week of **20 to 24 September**. Member Governments may designate a specific day during that week for their relevant celebrations informing the Organization, as early as possible, of any associated relevant activities they may plan to hold.

At IMO, the 2010 World Maritime Day will be celebrated on **Thursday, 23 September**, with various relevant events being planned to also be held on that day.

The theme for World Maritime Day 2010 will be “**2010: Year of the Seafarer**”. It was chosen in order to give IMO and the maritime community at large the opportunity to pay tribute to seafarers for their unique contribution to society and in recognition of the risks they shoulder in the execution of their duties in an often hostile environment.

The theme is in line with the ongoing “**Go to Sea!**” campaign and also aims at complementing the comprehensive review to update the STCW Convention and Code, the texts of which are due to be considered by a diplomatic conference scheduled to be held in Manila in mid-2010.

The unique hazards confronting seafarers – pirate attacks, unwarranted detention and abandonment, to name but a few – coupled with the predicted looming shortage of ships’ officers, make it ever more incumbent upon IMO to take immediate and effective action to forestall a situation from developing in which ships are not manned with sufficient skilled personnel.

Equally importantly, naming next year as the “**Year of the Seafarer**” provides an opportunity to convey to the 1.5 million seafarers of the world a clear message of the international community’s care for them – as evidenced, among other things, by efforts to ensure that they are fairly treated when their ships are involved in accidents; that they are looked after when abandoned in ports; that they are not refused shore leave for security purposes; by the multi-faceted efforts to protect them while sailing in piracy-infested areas; and of the care taken to ensure that they are not left alone when in distress at sea – as demonstrated by the search and rescue centres IMO has established in areas of the world that lack the relevant infrastructure.

The Secretary-General would, therefore, appreciate it if efforts could be made by all concerned to focus on the theme specified above, when planning their celebration of next year's World Maritime Day.

The **2010 World Maritime Day parallel event** will be celebrated in Argentina at the kind invitation of the Government of Argentina. Further information on the parallel event will be circulated at the appropriate time.
